A SAW MILL IN THE BIG TIMBER COUNTRY

Synopsis of Film

1. An Oregon Saw Mill.

2. Rolling Logs of Douglas Fir upon Saw Carriage and cutting them into Planks.

3. Trim Saws.
   Removing the Bark and squaring the Edges of the Planks.

4. Circular Saws.
   Cutting the Boards into Lengths for Various Purposes.

5. Sorting Tables.
   The Boards are sorted for Size and Quality.

6. Lumber Stacker.
   The Boards are piled High and left to season.

7. Planer and Sider.
   Smoothing All Sides of the Boards.

8. Traveling Cranes loading Scows with Lumber for Shipyards.

9. Loading Cars for Shipment to Eastern States.

A SAW MILL IN THE BIG TIMBER COUNTRY

WITH the exception of the region extending from the Mississippi to the Rocky Mountains and a smaller region north of the Ohio River, the land surface of the United States was formerly covered with dense forests. The clearing of the land for agricultural purposes, for the building of ships, houses and other wooden structures, and for the making of paper and many other objects for which wood can be used, has robbed New England of its pines, hemlocks and spruces; has made great inroads into the forests of hard pine, cypress and hard woods of the south, and has turned much of the timber regions of Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota into land of impenetrable scrub growth.

The western coast from Alaska to California offers to the lumberman the last and greatest stand of primeval forest. Because of the ruthless waste of eastern trees and forest lands, Americans have at last awakened to a sense of their duty in the conservation of forest lands. The story of New England, the South, and the group of north central states, seemed about to be repeated on a larger and more tragic scale. In recent years, however, a higher sense of public responsibility has been awakened in the minds of those who control our public lands. The natural resources of the country will no longer be handed over for the exploitation of the privileged few to such extent as they have been in the past. The law makers and their representatives no

longer regard the natural wealth of the country as spoil for themselves and their friends. High-minded and patriotic men are beginning to see results from their long-continued protests against private spoliation of public wealth.

A new order of lumberman, having regard for public opinion and for public rights, has succeeded the land pirate of other days, who, unmolested by law, wrought ruin wherever he went. Federal, state and public influences have been brought to bear upon the question of forest lands. Nation and state have set aside vast areas in California, Oregon and Washington for forest conservation. The giant sequoia and the Douglas fir may yet escape the sad fate of their smaller eastern brethren. The sequoias, or redwoods, of California, whose mighty trunks through thousands of years have weathered tempest and storm, may live on undisturbed by the destructive axe. National parks now include within their boundaries practically all of these majestic trees.

In Oregon and Washington, where there are many thousands of square miles of untouched forests, chiefly Douglas fir, the Federal government has set aside over 4,500,000 acres of heavy-growth timber lands for public use and preservation. Private enterprises, however, in ways which in many cases would bear little inspection, have come into control of the remainder of these majestic forests.

No one who has not lived among them can form any idea of the size of these trees. The largest southern pine seems but a sapling when compared with a Douglas fir. To the western lumberman trees less than four feet in diameter are passed by as too small and of too little value

to cut. A six-foot tree, two hundred and fifty feet high, is regarded as one of medium size. Only trees from eight to fourteen feet in diameter are considered sufficiently large and mature.

The westerner, with great and heavy trees to deal with, has adopted methods of lumbering far different from those of the East. Steam engines, cables and flat cars have made possible a yearly production of thousands of million board feet in Oregon and Washington alone.

The process of felling the trees and getting them to the mill has been described in the abstract on Western Lumbering. We shall consider only the operations performed after the logs have been delivered to the mills.

When the logs from the forests have been floated or conveyed on cars to the mills, they are left in the water for several days. This cleans and softens the bark and wood, and lessens the friction of the saws and the amount of flying sawdust. From the river the logs are carried to the mill on an endless chain of revolving rollers. The lumberman pushes one end of a log upon the first roller, which is submerged in the stream. This carries it up the incline until the other rollers are engaged and the log is thus moved to the carriage. A steam "nigger" pushes the log from the rolls to the log carriage, an immense table which moves on rails toward the saws. The saws for the large logs of the Cascades are of the band saw type. An endless thin steel saw rapidly revolves over two wooden pulleys and the log on the carriage is steadily moved along while the saw cuts through it. The large logs are usually cut through the middle and laid with the flat surface upon the carriage top.

The halves are then sawed in the same way into girders, planks, or boards. The trim saws which move along the carriage remove the bark and square the planks and boards.

From the saws the boards are carried to a moving table which carries them to parallel circular saws, controlled by levers, which cut them to the required lengths. The boards then pass below the circular saws to an inclined moving runway which carries them to the sorting table.

Here they are graded for size and quality and distributed to the stackers who place the boards in huge piles to season. The stacks are so high that the boards are carried up to the men on an endless chain with arms at regular intervals at right angles to the chain. On these arms men place the boards as they come from the sorters. The chain, constantly moving, carries the boards up to the men who are stacking them. The heavier girders and planks are handled by engine and cable.

After the lumber has been thoroughly seasoned it is cut and planed to order by mechanical planers and then carried to the waiting vessels or cars for distribution where needed. At present most of the lumber of the western camps finds its way to western shipyards and shingle-mills, or to eastern lumber yards.

Questions, Topics, Suggestions

1. What is the present condition of the forests in the United States?
2. What states lead in lumber production?

3. What kinds of lumber does each produce?
4. For what purposes is each kind used?
5. What steps have been taken by the government for their preservation?
6. Describe the duties of forest rangers.
7. What is the annual loss in the United States caused by forest fires?
8. What is a board foot?
9. How do "timber cruisers" estimate the number of board feet in a standing tree?
10. How many board feet in an average Carolina pine? In a Douglas fir?

Questions on the Film

1. How is the log carried from the river to the mill?
2. Why is it sprayed with water before it enters the mill?
3. How long and how thick are the planks which you see cut from the logs?
4. What are the names of the various pieces of sawed lumber shown in the film?
5. How are the boards carried to different parts of the mill?
6. Describe the construction and operation of a "stacker?"

   Why and how is the lumber stacked?

7. What further operation is necessary after the lumber is stacked?

8. Describe methods of loading cars and scows.

References

Day, A. W. Lumbering in the world's greatest forests. Cassier's mag., Feb., 1911, pp. 291-306.

Nelson, M. O. The lumber industry of America. Am. Rev. of Rev., Nov., 1907, pp. 561-575.

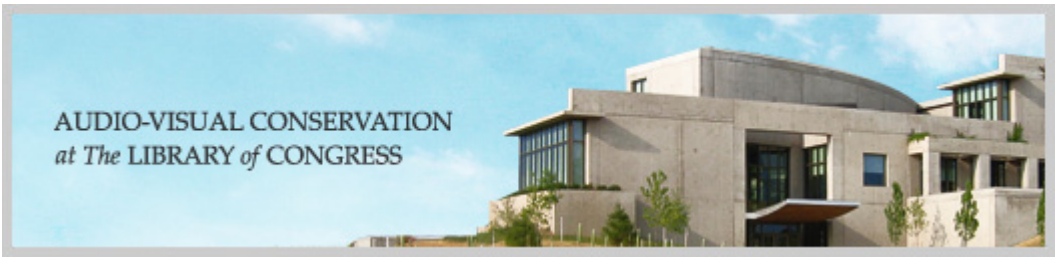
This document is from the Library of Congress
"Motion Picture Copyright Descriptions Collection, 1912-1977"

Collections Summary:

The Motion Picture Copyright Descriptions Collection, Class L and Class M, consists of forms, abstracts, plot summaries, dialogue and continuity scripts, press kits, publicity and other material, submitted for the purpose of enabling descriptive cataloging for motion picture photoplays registered with the United States Copyright Office under Class L and Class M from 1912-1977.

Class L Finding Aid:
https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mbrsmi/eadmbrsmi.mi020004

Class M Finding Aid:
https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mbrsmi/eadmbrsmi.mi021002



National Audio-Visual Conservation Center
The Library of Congress